595* Finally, let us not forget the spirit of gain and greed. Except in a few instances, a woman expects remuneration from a man to whom she has surrendered her body. Many infidelities may be explained by this practice, at least at the present time. But on the other hand, it should be noted that the woman's demand for a "wage" from her lover may be explained by an amorous concern; by giving the woman a gift or an amount of money the man shows [49] his regard for her; it is a demonstration of his affection for her, and the woman wants to be paid in order to be sure of her lover's love. That is not to say that such instances are common or frequent, but such a feeling is natural and actually exists in more than one case. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 2.

It is not surprising that the woman who lives in circumstances which are always unfavorable to chastity and marital fidelity is easily led to adultery and often falls. That is the basis of the proverb: [589] bǒmoto ndɛ́ lofolɔ́kɔ́, nkɔ́ ngonda ɛ́fɛ́ nd'ɛ́ɛngámɛ́, "the woman is a chrysalis; there is no forest where she does not hang" -- a clear condemnation of the frivolity of the daughters of Eve in the land of the Nkundɔ́. Nevertheless, these moral criticisms in the form of proverbs can be accepted only in a general way and must be understood cum grano salis; they leave the door wide open for exceptions.

595* 152 In his Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], (p. 38), Jadot has written: "The Bantu is capable of love . . . and that is all, and his wife -- no matter what has been said -- of a certain amount of marital fidelity. In general, neither the one nor the other go too far. Platonism, Petrarchism, and Romanticism are foreign to the love of the natives . . . I know . . . of cases of fierce jealousy and of beautiful faithfulness." (2)

2. See also ibid., p. 208 ff.

152 We conclude that love exists among the Nkundɔ́. This feeling is subjected to harsh attacks and is affected by many unfavorable circumstances, which may account for its imperfection and for certain

302 under the arms is related to sexuality and give it the same name as
851 they use for their pubic hair.

A person removes his or her own hair, or it is removed by a friend of the same sex. Formerly, the hairs were simply pulled out. Nowadays, many people shave with a lotéé. Moreover the practice tends to be confined to the hair connected with sexuality, but in the past everything was removed: eyebrows, eyelashes, mustaches, beards.

For the Nkundó hair removal is a form of beauty care. Their
302 explanation must be accepted, though the term "beauty care" must be broadly defined so that it will include also the depilation of parts of the body that are always hidden. This last form however, might have some relation to the tattoos: it makes tattooing easier and its effect more obvious. [71]

Article III. Prostitution

The dictionary defines prostitution as follows: "a trade which
● 548 consists in providing one's body for the pleasures of the public in exchange for money." In addition to this limited sense, the most important aspect of which is "in exchange for money," the word also has several broader meanings.

Prostitution is found in the world in various forms: 1) the kept woman, 2) the brothel, 3) the professional streetwalker, 4) the occasional streetwalker, 5) the married woman who has a steady relationship with a lover who pays her, 6) the woman who is the concubine of a number of men in succession and who is paid by each of them. We will examine the forms under which this misconduct has occurred and occurs among the Nkundó.

The first question we should ask is whether a Nkundó woman gave herself to a man for profit before the European occupation. It is true that a woman often demanded remuneration but, as we have already said, it is very difficult to determine whether she did so for gain or simply to be reassured of her lover's affection. Knowing the mentality of the Nkundó woman of today, we must admit that her greed sometimes brings her to acts of venal love. One or another of them has no doubt given her body in order to possess various

548 ornaments or objects for her toilette (hairpins, for example), and it is probable therefore that individual cases of this sort occurred. But it is altogether unlikely that the practice was widespread, as it does not fit in with the economic organization of this people, among whom wealth is more or less collectively owned and, moreover, (as will be shown in Chapter VI, Article II) a woman has no property rights. [72] Therefore we can assume that there were only a few occasional prostitutes.

On the other hand, there have never been any professional prostitutes; that is, Nkundó women have never made a job out of prostitution, and the same thing may be said of the other forms listed above.

The number of prostitutes was necessarily limited, however, by the fact that the great majority of women were always married young (Chapter IV, Article I), and that adultery was severely punished (Chapter VI, Article VII).

Nevertheless, there is something which superficially resembles prostitution; that is, there is a category of girls and women whom at first glance one would be tempted to call prostitutes. Therefore it would be useful to examine the situation somewhat more closely, for though in itself it is entirely different from prostitution, it could easily lend itself to it.

548 582 882 It sometimes happens that a girl, besides the bolúmbú (a socio-political institution in no way related to the degeneration of female sexuality), is kept in the home of her parents beyond the customary age before she is given in marriage. Such a girl is called ɛ́fótswấla, "the one who does not marry." She is not bolúmbú. Externally or -- to use philosophical terminology -- materially, the two customs resemble each other; but formally they are entirely different. Creating a bolúmbú involves authority and influence and is thus a public matter. Whether a girl becomes an ɛ́fótswấla, on the other hand, is a private matter between father and daughter. While the creation of a bolúmbú is accompanied by public feasts and a decree officially proclaimed (boɛ́ko) by the father and accepted by the council of family heads [73], the establishment of a ɛ́fótswấla involves no official act or ceremony.

548 582 882 The name ɛfɔ̃tswâɛ̃la does not mean that the girl will stay single all her life. Her marriage is not permanently excluded; it is only postponed.

As for her behaviour, the efɔ̃tswâɛ̃la conducts herself like any Nkundɔ̃ girl. Nothing distinguishes her from her companions. If a good match is proposed to her, she marries like everyone else.

This custom -- if one can use the term -- therefore has no real connection with prostitution. All that can be said is that the girl who stays single longer and until adulthood, is exposed to more libertinism and a life of debauchery.

586x It also happens that parents who are angry because their daughter has dissolved a marriage to a man they consider a good son-in-law prevent her from remarrying in an effort to make her return to her legitimate husband. If the parents and their child each hold to their viewpoint without yielding, such a situation can go on for many months until the wife is -- practically speaking -- no longer under the authority of her husband. And since the opposition of her parents prevents her from being married by another man, she easily comes to give herself to all. It should be added that at present this case is chiefly hypothetical. Parents no longer have the authority [78] to thwart the desires of an adult daughter in this way; if she is stubborn they have to yield out of fear that she will run far away. And that would be to go from the frying pan into the fire. But in the past the kind of situation I have described was not unusual.

548 369 The most fertile places for the breeding and development of prostitution are to be sought in the centers. The following principal causes can be given:

1) Female vanity is overexcited by the sight [74] of all the dazzling riches which have been imported by white men and which are such a temptation to Negro women. It requires a considerable income to satisfy this desire to enhance one's native beauty. Ordinary laborers and artisans do not earn enough money to satisfy their wives or daughters in this respect. Mistresses of Europeans or of foreign black men, the wives of "clerks" and other representatives of Negro high society display a degree of luxury startling and striking to the rest.

369 548 2) There is a considerable excess of bachelors over eligible women.

[694] 3) The freedom to commit adultery: no sanctions were provided.[1]

[586] 4) The difficulty of finding a suitable husband experienced by many girls born in the centers. Marriages between individuals belonging to different groups (especially certain ones) seldom last. And since inhabitants of the centers have no fixed or stable residence, they intend sooner or later to go back to their tribe of origin. Serious-minded parents therefore discourage and thwart these "mixed" marriages. (1)

1. On this subject, read Jadot's fine page in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 132, beginning: "La prostitution devait inevitablement . . . (Prostitution was inevitably . . .).

[361] In the region under discussion there are only a few lightly populated centers: plantations, government or business stations, and small commercial centers. From time to time the bachelors there satisfy their desires with the wives of their fellow workers, and especially with women who come from the interior to sell their products at market. But they do not avoid one of the consequences of prostitution, namely the spreading of venereal diseases.

It is possible to conclude that in the past prostitution existed only in a very broad sense [75] and there was very little of it. In [114] Engel's article, "Les Wangata" op. cit., he writes that among the Wangata "prostitution no longer exists." If the eminent author is using the term according to the meaning in the dictionary, we may ask on what basis he is implicitly stating that this institution existed in the past. If prostitution is broadly defined, then the facts contradict his remark, for actually it has not ceased to develop among the tribes he discussed, who are located very close to the city of Coquilhatville and its various suburbs.

[1] [i.e., in the centers.– Analyst]

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178 The fact of colonization has greatly changed the situation. The freedom of communication across great distances, the introduction of new and varied goods and especially of money, have had a great influence on the development of prostitution. The economic system of the people remains the same; but when the women are away from their families or their husbands, they spend their means at their own discretion. And, since the objects of adornment available to them have greatly increased, they have a personal incentive to engage in immoral conduct.

The vice has not therefore taken on European forms; modern changes have simply increased -- but in enormous proportions -- the number of occasional streetwalkers. The development of this state of affairs is encouraged by the procuring activities of certain polygamous and even monogamous men living near European centers, which give rise to the attitude of their wives. For though the husband may reap the primary financial benefit, the wife is not deprived of her little gain, and her native cupidity easily pushes her to engage without scruple in commercializing her body.

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548 The women under discussion are usually married. Often they have a recognized lover among the laborers in the camps, and he usually pays for their faithfulness. Thus we arrive at the married woman with a regular paying lover. [76]

This form of prostitution has developed even outside laborers' camps. It is to be found among the people on the river banks, who are more in contact with the Whites and their people and in the neighboring villages. It is especially prevalent among the Beloko, fairly near Coquilhatville, where it is spreading even among wives of monogamists. This perversion takes root all the more rapidly because it has a certain resemblance to the ancestral custom of a recognized concubinage (see Chapter VI, Article VIII, 2) and like the latter, it often does not take the form of prostitution. That is to say, the illicit relationship is not engaged in for the sake of gain. Furthermore, an arrangement is often made with the husband.

[369] As to the other forms of prostitution listed, they are still unknown in the native villages and in the small centers located in the territory studied. Some of them, however, may develop in the fairly near future.

548 In a center like Coquilhatville there are loose women who live in concubinage, first with one man and then another, a few days or weeks with this one, then the same length of time with that one; they are paid by each man but refuse to give up their freedom permanently. It is true that this city is outside the geographical limits of our study, but since it is located close to Nkundó territory and is important to them, I have touched on it briefly. No brothels are to be found there, and one does not encounter professional streetwalkers except for a few women who solicit among ship's crews. Most of the prostitutes in Coquilhatville are single girls or divorcées (legally or in fact). This disguised form of prostitution is not regulated here as it is in Leopoldville. (1) Nevertheless, the [77] government recognizes,

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1. In the capital all native women who are adult and able bodied and who theoretically are living alone are taxed 50 francs (the certificates of payment show, in addition to other information, the number, name and address of the person taxed). This tax is not the equivalent of a permit to engage in licentious behavior or libertinism. It is not called a "prostitution tax" or any equivalent name, but some Europeans call it that because it has that appearance.

In addition there is a real regulation concerning prostitution; it is the Governor General's order of November 5, 1913, which establishes cards and periodical sanitary examinations for prostitutes. It would seem to be applied in Matadi, Leopoldville, and Elisabethville.

at least in practice, the existence of a class of "free women" present in considerable numbers. Their way of life is contagious to such a degree that -- to an extent which varies greatly -- a noticeable number of girls who live with their parents but aspire to luxury have been seduced by it. (1)

1. According to the latest figures

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available to me, the government recognizes the presence of 702 free women out of a population of 8,386 persons who are not permanent residents.

Article IV. Premarital Sexuality

896 Under this heading we will examine:

1. What the Nkundó think about virginity.
2. Relations between single people.
3. The Nkundó's attitude toward births outside of wedlock.

1. Virginity

The word "virginity" has a double meaning. It may signify the presence of the hymen, the wholeness of the body, or it may have the meaning given in the dictionary: "virgin, a girl who has never had intercourse with a man."

Because of the practice described in Article II, 1, Nkundó girls who remain physically virgin until adulthood are extremely rare. Even if a girl does not begin sexual life until after her body has reached maturity -- a situation which occurs rarely today but which was formerly common, (2) [78] she will not give herself up to carnal

2. See no. 2 of the present article.

pleasures until after she has broken her hymen.

585 836 What is the Nkundó attitude toward virginity? This question must be divided into two parts:

1) Does the future husband attach any importance to the physical virginity of his fiancée? Evidently not from what we have seen.

2) Does he attach any importance to her moral virginity? That is, is it a matter of indifference to him whether or not he is the first to have intercourse with her?

672 837 [842] in the case of an unmarried mother, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III, 3.

[843] Adultery also becomes especially serious during the period preceding childbirth when there is a special prohibition against it, as endangering the lives of both mother and child, as we will explain in Chapter X, Article III.

7. Remarks and general conclusions

837 [721] 1) In former times the offense of adultery, even in its mildest form, that is, an isolated act, was one of the chief causes of "wars" between villages. Sometimes both sides called on their relatives by marriage to assist them, and the result was a general upheaval.

837 595* 2) As a rule a husband wants his wife to be faithful. Doubtless there are exceptions. Most if not all of them were formerly found among the old polygamists. At their age they were disgusted with continual palavers, and their experience as men had taught them that they often became angry and uselessly complicated their little lives. They preferred to close their eyes, like good old Bonoť w'ikolongo of Iteko (the Bombwanja clan of the Boóyá). He came to see me in the Christian village of Bombomba through which I was passing at the beginning of March, 1933. I asked him why he was adorned with so many bells, and he answered naively, "I always wear them. That way my wives know of my coming already from a distance. It gives them time to stop slandering me and to send their lovers away." When I expressed my surprise that he did not want to catch them in the act in order to punish them and end their infidelities, he answered me with a smile, "No, Father, jealousy . . . is for the young. As for me, I have seen so much of it that I no longer have any desire to get angry and make palavers for these trivialities."

● 578 837 595* Since the coming of the Europeans some unscrupulous men -- especially polygamists -- have been engaging in [328] a kind of procuring. They send their wives to commit adultery in order to be able to catch them in the act and thus enrich themselves. Or else they lend their wives for one night or more to laborers or soldiers who are

548 837 595x bachelors in law or in fact.

Knowing their wives' weak and sensual natures, some men save the rings that come to them as indemnities -- today as in the past. When this capital has grown sufficiently, they use it to acquire a new wife. The latter is in a sense the other wife's nkita, and she is called, rather crudely, nkita e' efufa, efufa being the piece of cloth (apron) worn by the women. Such action does not mean that the husband wishes to speculate in immorality. He simply profits from what is a fact. But this attitude could easily degenerate, and at the present time the danger that it might is no longer imaginary, although for the moment things have not gone that far. Watchfulness on the part of administrative authorities can avoid all exploitation of marital infidelity by preventing the development of this evil or checking it where it already exists.

837 593x The attitude toward a spouse's adultery varies greatly with different situations. These variations spring not only from the temperament of the injured party -- this goes without saying -- but also from the way the one guilty of adultery fulfills other marital obligations. This is particularly true with respect to a woman's "weaknesses." If she otherwise shows herself to be a devoted wife who is attentive, respectful, hard working, and one who takes the interests of her husband and children to heart, in a word, a good housewife, her husband will regret her infidelities, but he will pay less attention to these failings, since she compensates for them by many good qualities which show that she seriously loves him and lets herself go solely out of weakness. On the other hand, if a wife becomes neglectful, [329], disagreeable, and disrespectful, the change will indicate that something other than just weakness is involved, that her love for her husband has cooled and has chosen another object.

This is the sound philosophy of conjugal life among the Nkundó, as it is proclaimed and taught by all their old men and sages.

837 3) In spite of the terrible sanctions against adultery, it would appear that this offence has always been common. Certain events, such as deaths, feasts, and dances which last long into the night, are especially conducive to laxity. But even under ordinary